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ABSTRACT

This paper explores issues related to the degree to which weight and emphasis are given in higher education hiring and promotion practices to research versus teaching and service. In particular it examines the special problems posed by research demands in traditionally non-research universities. Noting that one of the most significant preconditions to faculty research is the availability of resources in the library, this paper reviews and analyzes the problems involved by looking at current research collections in academic libraries, and examining the political and financial problems of building research collections. One of the basic problems facing colleges and universities is that the large research libraries exist in schools with the resources to acquire and maintain them; however, if traditionally non-research schools are to maintain consistent long-range policies to hire and promote on the basis of research, then they must also provide resources. The key and fundamental base of developing a strong research collection is to formulate a library collection policy. The policy will address many considerations, among the major ones: (1) the need for the library, faculty, and administration to work out the school's strengths and determine the direction and goals of research; (2) the need for a higher commitment to spending on research, and a larger percentage of commitment to academic support, especially the library; (3) the effects of rising prices for library materials; and (4) the need for continued financial support. Theoretical and practical solutions to the problems conclude the report. (THC)

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The Library and New Research Emphasis: Political and Financial Problems With Building a Research Base

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The Library and New Research Emphasis: Political and Financial Problems With Building a Research Base.

There is in higher education an old problem with a new twist. The old problem is of course the weight and emphasis given to research vs. teaching and service in university hiring and promotion. The new twist is the degree to which this has pervaded the higher education environment, and the special problem posed by research demands in traditionally non-research universities. Specifically, there are preconditions to faculty research, and one of the most important of these is the resources available in the library. The attempt here is to review and analyze the problem with a special look at research library collections as they exist, and the political and financial problems of building research collections in existing academic libraries. Finally a summation and some recommendations will be offered in order to better clarify the issues and address specific problems of colleges and universities.

The first thing that is in order is establishing the hiring and promotion environment in higher education. One need look no further than the Chronicle of Higher Education. The prevalence of the issue can be gauged by the continual appearance of articles dealing with research and hiring/promotion. A recent article actually listed suggested ways to lengthen a publications list on a vita. The operating assumption of such an article was that "a long publication list is better than a short one of any sort when it's time for a promotion or a raise."[1] Another very recent article interviewed new professors trying to break in to academia. A survey and the interviews revealed the importance placed on research. One interviewee made the flat statement that "Ph.D. institutions want people who have already published."[2] The survey by the Modern Language Association revealed that Ph.D. departments rank publication/research records and potential first in hiring considerations. B.A.-M.A. and University departments (ie. a non-Ph.D. department in a Ph.D. school) ranked research/publication second.[3]

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[1]Pablo Shorr Parrish, "7 Ways to Lengthen a Publication List Without Doing Anything Very Original," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 26, No. 12, 18 May, 1983, p. 64.

[2]Suzanne Perry, "Academic Jobseeking Today a Traumatic Experience," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 27, No. 7, 12 Oct., 1983, p. 23.

[3]Suzanne Perry, "Top Hiring Criteria: Publications, 'Flexibility'," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 27, No. 7, 12 Oct., 1983, p. 22.

Clearly the attention given to the topic indicates that pressure to research has become a factor in more than the traditional research universities like Harvard, U.C.-Berkeley, University of Chicago, etc. Research for promotion and hiring, as indicated in the Chronicle is now an influence in the traditionally non-research schools. A specific example of this is my own university, Ball State. B.S.U. is representative of the pattern in many institutions. It has a normal school/teachers college background, and expansion during the '50's and '60's led to university status late in the latter decade. 1978 statistics (somewhat dated) put full time graduate enrollment at 643.[4] The latest volume count of the library stands at about 1.13 million. A new set of guidelines issued by the Graduate Education Policy Committee heavily stresses research for qualification to teach at the graduate level. Full membership requires "active, continued production and dissemination of scholarly works."[5] There are eight separate categories to be listed in documenting one's "scholarly works", and it comprises 40% of the entire application.[6] Clearly there is a push for research at Ball State, and one can use the Chronicle's information combined with some familiar elements at B.S.U. and extrapolate the trend to many similar schools. The problem comes in when one looks at the established research universities and the different situation those faculty find themselves in, in terms of resources.

Setting up the situation requires establishing a few principles. The first of these is that the library must be an available resource waiting to be mined for scholarly work. One does not make a research library by simply naming it such, or by a sudden splurge in purchases in one or two subject areas. The collection takes time and skill to build, especially for a research base. Specialization, historical works,

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[4] Julie A.C. Virgo, Sarah How, & Annette Fern, ACRL University Library Statistics, 1978-1979 (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 1980), p. 13.

[5] Application for Membership, Graduate Faculty (Muncie, Ind.: Graduate Education Policy Committee, Ball State University, 1983), p. 1.

[6] Ibid. pp. 3-4.

recent in-depth collecting, and future planning are what provide adequate depth for research. The second and related principle is that adequated library holdings are related to the size of the university, and most importantly, faculty numbers and numbers of graduate students in masters and doctoral programs. A conservative estimate allocates 100 volumes per faculty member, 3050 volumes per masters student, and 24,500 volumes per doctoral student.[7] In other words, a library must be large to handle the research demands of graduate programs, and generally, the largest libraries are the great academic research libraries. A glance at a readily available list of the largest academic libraries in the United States confirms this. A virtual Who's Who of well-known research universities is revealled: #1-Harvard; #2-Yale; #3-University of Illinois; #4-U.C.-Berkeley; #5-University of Michigan; #6-Columbia; #7-Stanford; #8-University of Chicago; etc., etc. In all, the list includes 30 schools with collection sizes from 1.95 million volumes up to 9.9 million at Harvard.[8]

This is not the end of the story though. As anyone who even is faintly familier with higher education knows, money is intricately involved with the operation of a university. In our case, there must be financial backing to buy, build maintain, and house those collection. Again the Chronicle steps in with some helpful information. A 1982 survey listed and ranked the 194 endowments reported to the National Association of College and University Business Officers.[9] It is fair to say that the size of those endowments is some fair measure of the financial backing that a school enjoys. After all, the endowments are both a measure of financial solvency, and a resource upon which to draw, supplemental to other monies. A quick comparison of the two lists (my apologies to students of statistics) reveals some interesting correlations. Seven of the schools in the library list were not on the endowment survey: Universities of Illinois, California at Berkeley and Los Angeles, Minnesota, Washington, Florida, and Kansas. One might note here that all of these schools are public, and therefore receive substantial support from their respective states. Out of the 23 remaining schools, three were quite

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[7] R. Marvin McInnis, "The Formula Approach to Library Size: An Empirical Study of Its Efficacy in Evaluating Research Libraries," College and Research Libraries, 35, (May 1972), p. 191. Figures for other areas omitted.

[8] "Large U.S. University Libraries: 1978-79," Hammond Almanac: The One-Volume Encyclopedia of a Million Facts and Records 1983, p. 760.

[9] "Endowments of 194 Colleges on June 30, 1982," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 26, No. 4, 23 Mar., 1983.

low on the endowments ranking: Indiana University at 142nd; University of Utah at 112th; University of Iowa at 156th. The maximum of those endowments was $20.4 million. Once these schools are discounted, the lowest ranking is 77th at an endowment of $41.3 million. There is however some further discriminating that can be done to reveal more dramatic results. If the group of five universities between 77th and 32nd endowment ranking are removed (University of North Carolina, 77th; University of Missouri, 74th; University of Wisconson, 60th; Ohio State, 42nd; University of Michigan, 32nd) then a dramatic rise in endowment ranking and size is seen. We are left with 15 universities ranking no lower than 23rd in endowments at a minimum of $151.38 million, and up to the maximum of $1.711 billion for Harvard. Those universities (and of course their libraries) are: Duke, 23rd; University of Virginia, 22nd; U.S.C., 21st; University of Pennsylvania, 17th; Johns Hopkins, 16th; New York U., 12th; Cornell, 11th; Northwestern, 10th; University of Chicago, 8th; Stanford, 6th; Yale, 5th; Columbia, 4th; Princeton, 3rd; University of Texas, 2nd; and of course Harvard, 1st. Fully one half of the 30 largest university libraries are in schools which occupy 15/23 of the top endowments for universities. Furthermore, of the 12 highest endowments, ($275 million and above) 10 of the schools are on the list of largest academic libraries. Only Rice at a respectable 900,000 volumes[10] and M.I.T. at 1.7 million volumes[11] are not on the list. Rice is a small school at 3,600 students,[12] and M.I.T. is of course, very specialized. This reasonably accounts for their absence, along with the note that each has access to larger collections in the immediate area. Even given the rough nature of this analysis, it is obvious that research collections exist most often in universities that are financially well off. A research base takes money to build and maintain, and it seems that universities which are well endowed or presumably well supported through public means can afford to have such a resource.

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[10] "Rice University," Academic American Encyclopedia, 1983.

[11] "Massachusetts Institute of Technology," Ibid.

[12] "Rice," Ibid.

It would be germane to our discussion to pause here and reframe the problem being addressed. The large research libraries exist in schools with the resources to aquire and maintain them. They need that collection because their reputation is presumably based on high quality research and graduate students. It is important to note that these schools obviously place a high priority on the library collection; if nothing else this is indicated by sheer size. They then must see the library as a key element and resource for the research at the school. Simply put, long-range research goals requires depth in resources and a commitment to the library's collection. The faculty at these schools do not lack research direction, motivation, opportunity, or the material to draw upon. It is precisely here that new research emphasis in traditionally non-research schools run into problems. If those schools are to maintain consistent long range policies to hire and promote on the basis of research, or with research as a major factor, then there must be resources provided. Such a long term policy requires a research base. The faculty and graduate students simply can not create something from nothing. Nor can the faculty procure all their own research materials needed. Too much of it is very expensive or unavailable, and that is not even a reasonable expectation. These faculties are then faced with the problem of using a library set up for undergraduates, which was formerly quite inadequate. What we must now examine are the problems with building a research base in these kinds of colleges and universities.

The NEA surveyed and summarized the expenditure patterns of higher education institutions. The data reveals that percentages of expenditures on academic support (which includes library purchases and budgets) varies only slightly between public and private universities and public and private other 4-year institutions which do not grant Ph.D.'s.[13] One difference of course is that the universities have larger budget bases which makes their 8-9% commitment much larger.[14] The other difference is that the universities devote a higher percentage to research: 16.2 & 14.5%[15] for public and private respectively, and only 4.6 & 4.5% respectively in the other 4-year schools.[16] This indicates that though research may be stressed

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[13] National Education Association, Higher Education Institutions: Patterns of Expenditures (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 1980), pp. 16-17, 19-20.

[14] Ibid., pp. 16, 19.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., pp. 17, 20.

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in hiring and promotion, the funds are not allocated for it in the non-research schools. For the libraries in those schools, there would be a lack of focus in the areas and methods of scholarly work, and very little upon which to concentrate financial resources and collection efforts. This then brings up the subject of how those schools would build a library collection from an undergraduate or selective graduate base.

The key and fundamental base of developing such a collection is to formulate a library collection policy. That policy consists of many considerations, but we will concentrate on a few major ones here. The job of the librarian is to bring a knowledge of the present collection and its strengths in order to assess what the library will need in relation to university goals.[17] But more fundamental, the library, faculty, and administration must work out the school's strengths and determine the direction and goals of research.[18] For the library to build any kind of research base, these preconditions are essential. The library needs those guidelines and goals to carry out. The problem of course comes in getting the library, faculty, and administration of a school to meet, agree, agree to act, and then actually carry through. The university/college leadership may be politically hesitant to commit to certain areas at the expense of others. In terms of library policy, the faculty are not always suited to formulating such a goal. Charles Osburn states that they are "...strong individuals, unaccustiomed to understanding and working for an ill-defined common goal."[19] Furthermore, the NEA statistics show that if the pressure and commitment to research are real, then the long-term outlook should include a higher commitment to spending on research, and a larger percentage commitment to academic support, especially the library. Only when the library is given focus(es) can the money then be properly applied to building a research base.

Given these preconditions, there are still other obstacles facing a library that needs to grow. The boom in student population and fed-

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[17] Paul H. Mosher, "Collection Evaluation in Research Libraries: The Search for Quality, Consistency, and System in Collection Development," Library Resources and Technical Services, 23, No. 1, (Winter, 1979), p. 17.

[18] C. Freeman Sleeper, "Research and the College Collection: A Dean's Perspective," in Library Resources for College Scholars, ed. by Robert E. Danford (Lexington, Virg.,: Washington and Lee, 1980), pp. 33-34.

[19] Charles D. Osburn, "Collection Development Needs Professional Management," Journal of Academic Librarianship, 7, No. 3, (July, 1981), p. 150-151.

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erally sponsored research during the 1950's and 1960's was complemented by freewheeling spending by libraries during the same period.[20] But the 1970's saw major problems develop. Prices for library materials rose dramatically. Average prices for books and periodicals almost tripled, and even in established research libraries funds were shifted away from certain subject areas in order to maintain buying levels in others.[21] This is still a problem, and a special one for a library looking to expand. Even if one could get faculty and administrative consensus and commitment in order to formulate sound library purchasing policy, from where would continued financial backing come to build a good research base? What these libraries and the universities they belong to are caught in is a Catch-22. Established research universities have the financial backing and the existing research collection. They enjoy some security because their status/reputation ensures continued money, and the money ensures library maintenence and strong research commitments/resources, which in turn builds the reputation. How does a traditionally non-research school break into the cycle? Research is a worthy goal for administration and faculty to pursue. Almost any academic library can provide some fertile resources for short-term scholarly work, but there is a big difference between short-term goals and longe range policies. Where is the line drawn between high handed administrative pressure, and genuine commitment? Where is the line drawn between a reticent faculty and one that is hampered by lack of resources? Only one thing is certain, and that is that any serious attempt to incorporate research into the promotion/tenure/hiring scheme of a college or university must be accompanied by a joint commitment to the library's collection. Some consideration must now be given to ways to remedy this situation. The fact remains that research is and will be a big

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[20] Charles B. Osburn, Academic Research and Library Resources: Changing Patterns in America (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979) p. 107.

[21] Ibid. pp. 115 & 118.

factor in promotion and hiring and so the traditionally non-research schools must address the facts and issues. What follow are some suggestions, both theorectical and practical which could alleviate some of the problems.

The first of these considerations is about the responsibility of a university to its graduates. Put bluntly, is it ethical for a school to continue to offer a degree program if it will not or can not adequately provide the resources and direction for research that will better establish the degree and enable its graduates to compete? After all, we are ultimately speaking of strengthening programs for students, not faculty and administration. The competitive nature of the job market, especially academic, makes the commitment to a weak program disastrous for the student. An honest appraisal might result in streamlining and perhaps combining programs, and simply dropping others until support can be given to the existing ones.

The second suggestion is a very practical one. Each academic library, be it research or no, has special strengths. The librarians can be invaluable in identifying strengths to use as research bases right now. For instance, Ball State has the Middletown Archives for sociological, historical, and political research. An excellent collection in modern American poetry exists here also, along with the renown Steinbeck collection. There is also an excellent historical textbook collection. All of these are good resources, and Ball State shoud emphasize and use them to build and expand existing research at the university. Even schools only offering the B.A. or M.A. degree have similar library strengths in other areas. Earlham College has used the fact that it has an exemplary undergraduate library collection (exclusively) as a basis for research and studies about those kinds of collections and their use. This may seem like a simple matter, but the translation between identifying library strengths and organizing actual research in those areas is a hazardous road. The connections are not made very often. Indeed the problem was examined in this paper.

The conclusion of this paper can only be one thing: a synthesis of all the problems and suggestions. It was established that research

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and research library collections correlate to size, and size correlates to financial backing. The sensible course for universities and colleges to follow if they wish to continue the worthy goal of encouraging research is to follow through with an organized program:

1. Assess degree programs and make commitments to those that the school can adequately support over a long term.
2. Assess existing library strengths with the library professional staff and administration.
3. Guide and encourage research into those institutional and library strengths.
4. Build the collection in those areas and financially commit to the library so that a program of expansion can begin, and the library can expand service in areas like library networks to provide for the faculty and student demands.

Ultimately what we are speaking of is better service to the student, and perhaps among universities, democratizing the "research game". It is hoped that some of the suggestions are helpful. Obviously, different emphasis would exist in each school. What is offered is a general outline attempting to give a school some focus and support the need for research.

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